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SECURITY INFORMATION
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PSB D-41
April 3, 1953

PSYCHOLOGICAL STRATEGY BOARD
Washington 25, D. C.

SUGGESTED GUIDANCE FOR PUBLIC ASPECTS OF U. S. POSITION
ON
KOREAN PRISONER-OF-WAR TALKS

(FOR BOARD APPROVAL)

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April 3, 1953SUGGESTED GUIDANCE FOR PUBLIC ASPECTS OF U. S. POSITION
ON
KOREAN PRISONER-OF-WAR TALKS

I.

QUESTION

What is the U. S. position on negotiations for the return of sick and wounded prisoners of war?

ANSWER

An agreement for the exchange of sick and wounded prisoners of war has been a primary goal of the U. S. Government for nearly two years. A proposal for such an exchange was first made by the U. S. at the beginning of the truce talks on July 11, 1951. From then until September 28, 1952, the U. S. brought it up at least three times formally and nine times informally. On December 13, 1952, the League of Red Cross Societies in Geneva passed a resolution calling for an immediate exchange of sick and wounded under the Geneva Convention, and sent copies of this to the Secretary General of the United Nations and to the U. S. Government, and also to the North Korean and Chinese Communist Governments. The U. S. Government took the matter up with General Clark, and on February 22, General Clark sent a communication to the Chinese and North Korean Communists urging negotiations for a sick and wounded prisoner exchange.

These facts prove the basic American position: namely, that it is not the Communists who have taken any initiative in the matter of an exchange of sick and wounded prisoners of war, but the U. S. which, as the culmination of a long series of patient and vigorous efforts dating back to the initial effort of July 11, 1951, has succeeded in bringing about a resumption of negotiations on the exchange of sick and wounded prisoners of war.

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III.

QUESTION

What is the U. S. position on the resumption of negotiations for a truce or cease-fire in Korea?

ANSWER

The U. S. position is that, once the entire process of exchanging sick and wounded prisoners has been completed, but not before then, the US-UN remains prepared, as it always has been prepared, to continue the armistice discussions. The U. S. position is further that Chou En Lai's so-called offer is not a new Communist initiative at all, but is a very belated response to the US-UN statement made when the truce talks were adjourned on October 8, that we would be prepared to resume these talks whenever the Communists indicated their readiness to present any reasonable proposals.

The U. S. stands unshakably opposed to any compromise of our basic position against forced repatriation. We will not abandon that stand, based on the most elementary moral and humane considerations, and we emphasize that any resumption of truce talks must be on that basis.

Apart from our fundamental position that we are glad the Communists have come to their senses and agreed at last to continue the discussions reasonably, our attitude is that the details of Chou En Lai's offer are too vague for us to come to grips with them until they are more clearly delineated. Many points would require clarification, including the nature of the neutral control over prisoners of war. If agreement is reached on such neutral control, the U. S. will insist upon certain definite inspection rights in the prisoner-of-war camps to safeguard against any undue enemy psychological pressure being brought to

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bear upon Chinese or North Korean prisoners of war who have stated that they would forcibly resist being returned to Communist control. We would also want effective safeguards against the possibility that the neutral state or states handling the prisoner exchange might lend unwitting assistance to enemy pressures.

III.

QUESTION

What is U. S. policy in face of the probability that a considerable number of the sick and wounded American prisoners of war who are returned will have been Communist indoctrinated or brain-washed?

ANSWER

The U. S. policy with regard to returned American sick and wounded prisoners of war who have become Communist indoctrinated is that they are victims of Communist mental aggression as well as of Communist military aggression, and that they must first of all have appropriate hospital facilities and hygienic attention. If conditions on the spot make it at all practicable, all sick and wounded who return should be immediately whisked away to hospitals or rest and rehabilitation camps. The press should not be allowed to interview these sick and wounded prisoners immediately. Consideration might be given to arranging for interviews after a short period of time has elapsed and after some screening has been possible to ascertain the degree of Communist indoctrination.

This policy can only succeed on three conditions:

1. That the American public be prepared, beginning immediately, to face the grim realities of the brain-washing process. To achieve this essential aim quickly, it is proposed that the President himself announce

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the appointment of a number of outstanding scientists in this field to serve as a Special Advisory Group to the Committee which is studying the brain-washing problem (a list of such prominent scientific advisors is under preparation by the Brain-Washing Committee.)

2. Special efforts must be made immediately to enlist the active cooperation of the American press in explaining this problem in its true magnitude and perspective to the American people. This should be done through a special briefing given, perhaps, through the American Society of Newspaper Editors, by a group of top-level Government and military officials, including the President himself, if possible; if not, then the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of State, the Chief of Staff, and one or more leading psychiatric scientists.

3. The families of the men concerned will, in a sense, be the main problem, and they must be given the highest priority treatment. In every case, there must be a personal letter signed by a really high-ranking officer of the Army - if possible, the Chief of Staff himself - explaining what has happened, not alarmingly but factually and sympathetically, but nevertheless making it plain that this mental aggression is one of the new horrors of modern warfare as the Communists wage it. In addition, it is urgently proposed that wherever possible the families of these men - especially in the case of Communist-indoctrinated sick and wounded, and of Communist-indoctrinated or brain-washed Americans, who refuse to return - be visited personally, in addition to the letter, by a high-ranking officer in that military area who has been especially trained on how to explain this brain-washing problem.

IV.**QUESTION**

What is U. S. policy toward American prisoners of war - both sick and wounded and other - who choose to remain in the custody of the Communists?

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The policy outlined in III. above applies fully in this case as well. The U. S. will make every effort to obtain access to these prisoners of war with a view to confirming at first hand their refusal to return and of endeavoring to ascertain what form of pressure or terror or drugs has been utilized to bring it about, but only on conditions that fully safeguard our position if and when the enemy asks for the same access to their prisoners.

With regard to sick and wounded prisoners of war who refuse to return, it is strongly recommended that the U. S. negotiators insist on the right to interview these disabled prisoners of war.

V.

QUESTION

What is U. S. policy with regard to probable Communist propaganda efforts to exploit over the radio, in the press, etc., this expected refusal on the part of some brain-washed American prisoners to return home?

ANSWER

U. S. policy is to prepare the public fully, via press, radio, and television, for this probable development, and to do this in advance of the expected Communist propaganda attack. This means that the background material already assembled for the purpose should be released as soon as possible - either before or during the negotiations on the exchange of sick and wounded. It is recommended that this release of information on brain-washing, etc., be kicked off by the President's announcement suggested above, so that it will have the greatest possible impact throughout the country.

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VI.

QUESTION

What is the United States position as to press, radio, and TV interviews with returning prisoners of war upon their arrival in the States?

ANSWER

In the case of sick and wounded prisoners of war, these should receive hospital or rehabilitation treatment which will give time for a de indoctrination for those who have been brain-washed.

VII.

QUESTION

What plans are under way to exploit properly those of our sick and wounded prisoners of war who can vividly describe the true nature of the improper treatment received at the hands of their Communist captors?

ANSWER

The military authorities in charge of the reception of sick and wounded prisoners are expected, at the earliest moment compatible with the physical condition of the returned prisoners, to interrogate them with a view to making full publicity use of effective information of this nature.

VIII.

QUESTION

What defenses do we propose to set up to neutralize any claims of enemy returnees that they were approached by UN security officers to act as agents?

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This sort of problem should be handled by refusing to attribute any particular importance to it, but at the same time having some appropriate spokesman (probably in the UN Command) point out in advance that this is the sort of thing the Communists are likely to suggest, judging others by their own behaviour.

IX.

QUESTION

What should be the U. S. attitude toward the probability that the Communists will use their own returned sick and wounded prisoners of war for propaganda purposes; parading wounded and maimed prisoners about and claiming that they provide evidence of alleged "barbarous" treatment received while in UN prisoner-of-war camps?

ANSWER

It is U. S. psychological policy to prepare for Communist charges of this sort by warning against them in advance. In fact, it should be the U. S. tactic in the present situation to, if anything, overstate the magnitude of the problem and of the enemy's intentions in this regard, partly to educate and forewarn the American public, and partly with the idea that if Communist efforts along these lines fall short of our warning, we will thereby have reduced their impact.

To offset this propaganda tirade, we should start at once a series of broadcasts, prior to their return, to China, North Korea, USSR and satellite countries, describing the actual treatment of POWs from the time they are captured to their repatriation. The second report of the International Red Cross should be used for quotations showing that enemy wounded prisoners of war (a) received the same medical treatment as our own wounded soldiers; (b) exhibit the chart showing that the general

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physical condition of the prisoners of war has improved since capture; (c) their weight has increased; (d) those having disease have been cured; (e) the food they receive is better than the food provided by their own army; (f) those who wish it are taught a trade; (g) there is no forced labor except as punishment; (h) no forced indoctrination; and (i) recreation facilities, including libraries and sports, are provided.

Full coverage should be given of prison riots and disturbances, and use of documented evidence to show that they were instigated by hardcore Communist cells and directed by the Korean High Command to embarrass the United Nations and Prison Command.

X.

QUESTION

What is to be the U. S. attitude toward US-UN prisoners of war not accounted for by the Communists?

ANSWER

United States policy is to be prepared to bring out, at the most appropriate time, a hard-hitting statement charging the Communists with murdering or otherwise brutally disposing of these prisoners of war. It should probably not be brought out in advance, but should be held as a counter-charge to be made probably at the UN, if and when the Communist propaganda attack on the prisoner-of-war issue is being pushed intensively.

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PSYCHOLOGICAL STRATEGY BOARD
Washington 25, D. C.

April 6, 1953

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PSYCHOLOGICAL STRATEGY BOARD

SUBJECT: Immediate Psychological Aspects of Renewed
Negotiations in Korea.

At Mr. Kyes' suggestion, my staff has pulled together a check-list of relevant psychological considerations which the member agencies may find useful in dealing with the prisoner-of-war problem during renewed negotiations in Korea. Appropriate staffs in member agencies have been consulted, but there has not been time to clear the resulting text. I have also consulted the Chairman.

S/ George A. Morgan by M. B.

George A. Morgan
Acting Director

(To be attached to all copies of PSB D-41 and D-42.)

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ROUTING AND RECORD SHEET

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